**Getting Home Early**

 Do you remember a time when everything was clicking and you finished all your projects

a little early? I admit for me it is always a rare occasion as well. This past week I was given the

joy of having one of those opportunities. We had planned to travel to see my parents and family

for the Thanksgiving Holiday mid-day on Wednesday after work. Fortunately, I finished up all

my projects late Tuesday afternoon so we were able to leave early Wednesday morning. I had

hoped my parents wouldn’t mind the unexpected surprise of seeing us arrive just after lunch.

From our perspective, getting home early had several benefits.

The first advantage of arriving early would be getting to see and spend more time with

our loved ones. My wife, son, and I had been looking forward to a nice time away with

my parents enjoying their company and friendship. Shortening the gap of delay, always

heightens the joy, if the events we are anticipating are going to be pleasurable. It certainly was.

A second benefit of getting home early was receiving the gift of some much needed rest

and relaxation sooner. Who would not be thankful for a gift like that when we all lead such

hectic lives?

Third, we had a few extra hours with our parents before the rest of the clan descended.

Don’t get me wrong, I love my brothers and their families, but when you live out of town, a little

more one on one time with your Mom and Dad, is never a bad thing.

A fourth plus was getting to surprise the people we were visiting. I know what you’re

thinking, what if they were not quite ready for us yet? Fortunately, parents like mine are

always preparing ahead of time and seem to have everything perfect, most of the time. From our

perspective, it was fun to arrive early and see that sometimes even my parents had a bathroom

that didn’t get cleaned or a floor that hadn’t been swept. Surprising others, can remind us that

we are all human and none make it through this life always performing perfectly.

The other day I was thinking what the benefits might be for us arriving home early,

spiritually speaking? Looking back at my list only the first three apply. (Certainly it would be

impossible to ever surprise God, especially with the events of our birth or demise). Like

many of you, lately, we have had a few people close to us go home a little earlier than expected.

Who among us, could deny them the exceeding and great joy of getting to spend a few extra

precious hours with Daddy God before more of our clan, (millions of them,) descend?

Second, for each of our friends who arrived home early this year, how could we

deprive them of the added advantage of their new glorified body that will never need rest or

relaxation? In Heaven, we will have a body that is whole, outstanding, all-inclusive, and lacking

nothing. Each of us will experience a new way of life without pain, tears, sorrow or grief. A

Joy-filled existence!

Finally, who among us could ever dream of denying our loved ones the pleasure of

shortening the gap between this life and their great celebration with God? I like to think of the

words to that old hymn we use to sing. “Oh, what singing? Oh! what shouting? On that bright

and glorious morning when we all see Him!

Although many of us have watched loved ones reach home ahead of us, let’s be thankful

for their joy of getting home early! I’m sure each of them would challenge each of us to invest

in everyone around us, and find a few new friends to spend time with and take with us!